

From: Stephen Magill
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 1:18am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern,

I am of the opinion that the proposed settlement in the Microsoft anti-trust case fails to address several methods that Microsoft is using to lock out competition in the computer software industry. In particular, Microsoft's refusal to disclose file formats for Microsoft Office documents presents a significant barrier-to-entry in the business software sector. The secrecy of these file formats ensures that Microsoft's dominance in this area will be maintained, as it prevents competing products from working with the significant volume of documents created using Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Furthermore, disclosure of these formats does not harm Microsoft in any way. An examination of current open formats such as HTML, PDF, and MPEG verifies this. The critical piece of intellectual property is the authoring software, not the document format itself. All that releasing the details of file formats enables is additional competition and compatibility. Thus, any final judgment should include the requirement that Microsoft make publicly available the format for files produced with their Office suite of products.

Sincerely,

Stephen Magill
Student
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